3 Eng. Poetry vol 78.

THE CAPTIVE FREED;

OR, THE

RESCUE of the MUSE.

A

POETICAL ESSAY.

The *Bouts Rimez* were the favourites of the *French* nation for a whole age together, and that at a time when it abounded in wit and learning. They were a list of words that rhyme to one another, drawn up by another hand, and given to a poet, who was to make a poem to the rhymes, in the same order that they were placed upon the list: The more uncommon the rhymes were, the more extraordinary was the genius of the poet that could accommodate his verses to them. I do not know any greater instance of the decay of wit and learning among the *French* (which generally follows the declension of empire) than their endeavouring to restore this foolish kind of wit.

ADDISON.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Editor of a "little volume" entitled *Poetical Amuſements at a Villa near Bath*, having informed his readers, that "the publication conſiſts of ſeveral poetical contributions of a ſociety of friends, of whom the greater number viſited weekly, upon a fixed day, at a Villa within a ſmall diſtance of the city of Bath," obſerves, that "it was imagined, as an additional ſource of amuſement, to naturalize a little *Gallic* inſtitution, which has been productive of much wit and pleaſantry to that light and ſprightly nation.—Words were given out, that rhymed to each other, (by the French called *Bouts Rimés)* to be filled up in metre, for the following Friday."

It is the confinement of her powers by this inſtitution, which the Muſe here laments; and from which ſhe is ſuppoſed to be delivered by her Patroneſs.

This information, it is hoped, will explain the ſubſequent pages to thoſe readers who have not ſeen the "Poetical Amuſements:" which is the deſign of this Advertiſement.

TO THE

FAIR INSTITUTRESS

OF A

POETICAL SOCIETY

AT

A VILLA near *BATH*,

WHICH FLOURISHES UNDER HER PATRONAGE,

AND

IS ADORNED BY HER TALENTS,

THE FOLLOWING ESSAY IS,

With all imaginable RESPECT and HUMILITY,

INSCRIBED,

By her moſt obedient Servant,

The AUTHOR.

THE CAPTIVE FREED;

OR, THE

RESCUE OF THE MUSE.

ON AVON's Banks, whoſe winding waves along,
Dies the laſt trill of many a Poet's ſong;
On AVON's banks I took my ſilent way,
Wrapt in the fragrance of the riſing day;
When from thoſe Shades where ART on NATURE leans,
And roams, at large, her cultivated ſcenes,
With fairy ſtep where Pleaſure prints the ground,
And Beauty ſheds her roſeate blooms around;

From yon fair Seat of Elegance and Eaſe,*
Theſe plaintive accents ſtole upon the breeze:

" Ah! what avails it, that, with niceſt care,
" (Studious to pleaſe, and anxious to prepare)
" This Harp in Græcia's golden vales I ſtrung,
" Whilſt all *Parnaſſus* liſten'd as I ſung?——
" Ah! what avails it, that, by Tiber's Stream,
" I watch'd each youthful Poet's riſing dream;
" At Judgment's call, attemper'd Fancy's flame,
" And rang'd the juſt Ideas, as they came?——
" Ah! what avails it, that, in later times,
" I brav'd the horrours of Theſe Savage Climes,
" To Truth's bright ſtandard bade their ſons aſpire,
" Subdu'd their voice, and tun'd their Gothick lyre?——
" Ah! what avails it, if, a captive maid,
" I droop in bonds, and call in vain for aid?

" Where

* Batheaſton Villa.

" WHERE are ye, children of my earlieſt hopes,
" Ye MILTONS, DRYDENS, ADDISONS, and POPES ?—
" Ye ſaw my ſorrows once, when long I lay
" The helpleſs victim of barbarick ſway ;
" Ye ſaw, and mourn'd my violated charms,
" And tore the inglorious bondage from mine arms:
" Say, will ye leave your bleſt Elyſian bow'rs,
" Unbind the Muſe, and give her back her pow'rs ?
" For, held in chains, from *Gallia*'s recreant ſhore,
" Light o'er the chord theſe fingers fly no more ;
" But when my faltring voice attempts to ſing,
" They hurt, with awkward touch, the jarring ſtring.

" AH ! little dreamt I, when, by Fancy led
" To twine her living Myrtles round my head,
" I dar'd explore yon grove's poetick gloom,
" Ah ! little dreamt I of this ſervile doom ;

" For ſure, (I ſaid) within theſe fair domains,
" No danger lurks, no little tyrant reigns;
" But Taſte, ſublime, on Truth's eternal throne,
" Here ſits in peace, 'unrival'd and alone.'——
" Ah, witleſs Maid! thy wandering ſteps miſled,
" Thou droop'ſt—a Slave—and every hope is dead."

THE Mourner ceas'd:—I mark'd the parting ſtrain,
And ſtole, with eager ſtep, acroſs the plain.
Juſt where the cypreſs ſpreads its ſober ſhade,
And waves, accordant to the ſmooth caſcade,
Propt on her arm, a Female Figure lay,
'Midſt faded blooms, in hopeleſs diſarray;
With tinſel chains her ſwelling wriſts were bound,
Her Lyre, diſhonour'd, at her feet was found;
A mental languor ſlept upon her eyes,
And theſe faint accents mingled with her ſighs:
'Ah, witleſs Maid! thy wand'ring ſteps miſled,
Thou droop'ſt—a Slave—and every hope is dead!"

" NOT

" NOT ſo, ſweet Maid!" a ſoothing voice reply'd,
And ſtrait, her MYRA† trembled at her ſide:
" Not ſo, ſweet Miſtreſs of my earlieſt vows!
" No wrongs, like theſe, my faithful heart allows.—
" What tho', ſeduc'd by Faſhion's fickle laws,
" I left Thy praiſe, for Folly's vain applauſe;
" What tho', the dupe of Gaiety and Whim,
" I ſaw thee languiſh in theſe links ſo trim:
" Think not, for ever heedleſs of thy woes,
" Theſe filial hands ſhall leave thee to thy foes:
" No, peerleſs Maid! far other feelings move
" This heart, which beats with gratitude and love:
" Not theſe the thoughts thy purer lays inſpire,
" Not theſe the leſſons of thy heav'n-ſtrung lyre!"—
——She ſpoke, and inſtant, on her bended knee,
Stoop'd to her aid, and ſet the Mourner free.

† Mrs. MILLER. See " Poetical Amuſements:" where there is an Ode to this Lady, under the Name of MYRA.

" HENCE-

" HENCEFORTH (ſhe cried) be free, as light, and air,
" Secure from harm, and reſcued from deſpair.——
" Beſhrew the ſlave, who firſt, with dark deſign,
" Forg'd theſe baſe ſhackles for an hand like thine:
" What tho', eſtrang'd from Freedom's ſacred cauſe,
" A trifling nation chim'd them, with applauſe?
" Truth ſaw their triumph with indignant eye,
" And cruſh'd their Harp, and bade their Laurels die.
" Ah! never more may Folly's treacherous ſmile
" Thy truant Handmaid's erring ſteps beguile;
" Ah! never more may theſe fond eyes behold
" Thy flights reſtrain'd, thy native pow'rs controul'd:
" On Freedom's throne triumphant may'ſt thou ſit,
" And tread in duſt the Manacles of Wit.

" COME then, ſweet Maid! thy long-loſt charms renew,
" Give to thoſe faded cheeks their former hue;
" Let the keen glance its dying flames revive,
" And each bright feature of thy beauty live—

" For

" For, ſee! with looks which chide thy long delay,
" Yon feſtive Circle beckons thee away.
" See the gay throng, with readieſt homage bow,
" And wreaths of glory wait to deck thy brow.
" Hark! the glad Hall with ſounds extatick rings;
" For Thou, fair Maid! art Free, and TEMPLE‡ ſings.
" Scorn not the Verſe, which flows to ſwell thy fame;
" Check not the String, which vibrates to thy name;
" Propitious bid their grateful triumph laſt,
" Smile on the Preſent, and forgive the Paſt."

SHE ſaid:——The Muſe, with looks of love, obey'd,
And, with her MYRA, left the balmy ſhade:
The lines of ſadneſs vaniſh'd from her face;
Free, and compos'd, ſhe mov'd with wonted Grace;
Her eyes the raptures of her heart expreſt,
And ſoon THE VILLA hails its welcome gueſt.

‡ Lord Viſcount PALMERSTON. See " Poetical Amuſements."

THE END.

" For, lo! with looks which chide thy long delay,
" Yon festive Circle beckons thee away.
" See the gay throng, with readiest homage bow,
" And wreaths of glory wait to deck thy brow.
" Hark! the glad Hall with lovely enthusiasm rings;
" For Thou, fair Maid! art Free, and Tamrit‡ sings.
" Scorn not the Verse, which flows to tell thy fame;
" Check not the String, which vibrates to thy name;
" Propitious bid their grateful triumph hail,
" Smile on the Present, and forgive the Tail."

She said:—The Muse obeys of love, obey'd,
And, with her Myrra, [illegible] lary Maide:
The lines of Fashion vanish'd from her face;
Free, and corrupted, the mov'd with wonted Grace;
Her eyes the raptures of her heart express,
And soon This Verse hails its welcome guest.

† Lord Villiers PARLIAMENTARY. See "Poetical Annalements."

THE END.